

FIRST.

WHICH DECLARES WHO DON HERNANDO DE SOTO WAS, AND HOW HE OBTAINED THE GOVERNMENT OF FLORIDA.²

Captain Soto was the son of an esquire of Jeréz de Badajóz. He went to the Indies of Castile when Pedrías Dávila³ was governor of the Indies of the Ocean Sea. There he found himself with nothing else his own except his sword and shield. Because of his good qualities and courage, Pedrías made him captain of a troop of horse, and by his order he went with Hernando Pizarro⁴ to conquer Peru. There, according to the report of many creditable persons who were there, he distinguished himself over the other captains and principal persons, both at the seizure of Atabalipa,⁵ lord of Peru, and in making the entrance into the city of Cuzco, and in all other places where they encountered resistance, and where he happened to be. For that reason, aside from his part in the treasure of Atabalipa, he got good repartimiento, from which in time he collected one hundred and eighty thousand cruzados,⁶ which he took to Spain, with what fell to him as his share. Of this, the emperor took [by loan] a certain part which was repaid to him [Soto] by six hundred thousand reales⁷ with interest in the silks of Granada, while all the rest was delivered to him at the casa de contratación⁸ in Seville. He employed servants, including a majordomo, grand master of ceremonies, pages, equerry, chamberlain, footmen, and all the other servants requisite for an establishment of a gentleman. From Seville, he went to court, and at court was accompanied by Juan de Añasco,⁹ of Seville, Luis Moscoso de Alvarado,¹⁰ Nuño de Tobar, and Juan Rodriguez Lobillo. With the exception of Juan de Añasco, all the others had come with him from Peru; and each brought fourteen or fifteen thousand cruzados. They all went well and expensively dressed; and Soto, although because of his cupidity he was not liberal, yet since that was the first time he had to appear at court, spent very liberally, and went about closely attended by those I have named and by his servants and many others who came to him at court. He married Doña Isabel¹¹ de Bobadilla, daughter of Pedrías Dávila, conde de Puñonrostro. The emperor rewarded him by making him governor of the island of Cuba and adelantado of Florida, with the title of marquis to a certain part of the lands he might conquer.¹²

SECOND.

HOW CABEZA DE VACA CAME TO COURT AND GAVE ACCOUNT OF THE LAND OF FLORIDA; AND OF THE MEN WHO WERE GATHERED TOGETHER AT SEVILLE TO GO WITH DON HERNANDO DE SOTO.

After Don Hernando had obtained the government, a gentleman arrived at court from the Indies, Cabeza de Vaca by name, who had gone with Governor Narváez,¹³ who had perished in Florida. He told how Narváez had perished at sea with all his men; and how he and four others had escaped and reached New Spain. He brought also a written relation of what he had seen in Florida. This stated in certain places, "In such a place I saw this. Most of what I saw there I leave for discussion between myself and his Majesty." He described in general the wretchedness of the land and the hardships he had suffered. To some of his kinsfolk, who were minded to go to the Indies and strongly urged him to tell them whether he had seen any rich land in Florida, he said that he could not tell this, because he and another (by name, Dorantes,¹⁴ who had remained in New Spain with the intention of returning to Florida—for which purpose he [Cabeza de Vaca] came to Spain to beg the government from the emperor) had sworn not to divulge certain things which they had seen, lest some person might beg for it before hand. He gave them to understand that it was the richest land in the world. Don Hernando de Soto wished to take him [i.e., Cabeza de Vaca] with him and made him an advantageous proposal; but after they had come to an agreement, they fell out because Soto would not give him the money which he [Cabeza de Vaca] asked of him to buy a ship. Baltasar de Gallegos and Cristóbal de Espindola, his kinsmen, told him [Cabeza de Vaca] that since they had resolved to go to Florida with Soto because of what he had told them, he should advise them as to what they should do. Cabeza de Vaca told them that if he had given up going with Soto, it was because he expected to ask for another government and did not wish to go under the banner of another. Since Don Hernando de Soto already had the conquest of Florida, which he [Cabeza de Vaca] came to beg, he could not tell them, on account of his oath, what they wished to know. Nevertheless, he advised them to sell their estates and go with him [i.e., Soto], for in so doing they would act wisely. As soon as he had an opportunity, he spoke with the emperor and related to him all

he had suffered and seen and the other things he had succeeded in learning. Of this relation, made orally to the emperor by Cabeza de Vaca, the marqués de Astorga was informed. He determined at once to send his brother, Don Antonio Osorio, with Don Hernando de Soto, and two of his kinsmen made ready to go with him, namely, Francisco Osorio and Garcia Osorio. Don Antonio disposed of an income of six hundred thousand reales¹⁵ which he received from the Church, and Francisco Osorio of a village of vassals he owned in the district of Campos. They joined the adelantado at Seville, as did also Nuño de Tobar, Luis de Moscoso, and Juan Rodriguez Lobillo, with the wealth, amounting to fourteen or fifteen thousand cruzados, which each one had brought from Peru. Luis de Moscoso took two brothers with him. Don Carlos, who had married the governor's niece,¹⁶ went also and took his wife. From Badajóz went Pedro Calderón and three kinsmen of the adelantado, namely, Arias Tinoco, Alonso Romo, and Diego Tinoco. As Luis de Moscoso passed through Elvas, André de Vasconcelos spoke with him, and requested him to speak to Don Hernando de Soto in his behalf, and gave him patents issued by the marqués de Vilareal, conferring on him the captaincy of Ceuta, so that he might exhibit them. The adelantado saw these and found out who he [Vasconcelos] was and wrote him promising that he would favor him in every way and would give him men to command in Florida. From Elvas went André de Vasconcelos, Fernan Pegado, Antonio Martinez Segurado, Mem Royz Pereyra, Joan Cordeiro, Estevan Pegado, Bento Fernandez, and Alvaro Fernandez;¹⁷ and from Salamanca, Jaen, Valencia, Albuquerque, and other parts of Spain many persons of noble family gathered in Seville; so much so that many men of good condition, who had sold their estates, remained behind in San Lúcar because there was no ship for them; although for other known and rich countries it was usual to lack men. The cause of this was what Cabeza de Vaca had told the emperor and given persons who conversed with him to understand respecting that land. Soto made him [i.e., Cabeza de Vaca] fine proposals but Cabeza de Vaca, having agreed to go with him as mentioned above,* because Soto would not give him money to pay for a ship which he had bought, they disagreed, and Cabeza de Vaca went as governor to Río de la Plata. His kinsmen, Cristóbal de Espindola and Baltasar de Gallegos went with Soto. Baltasar de Gallegos sold houses, vineyards, a rent of wheat, and ninety geiras¹⁸ of olive orchard in the district of Seville. He obtained the post of chief constable and took his

*In the Portuguese text, the words for "as mentioned above," *como se já disse*, were enclosed in parentheses.

wife with him. Many other persons of rank also went with the adelantado, and obtained the following posts aided by powerful influence, for they were posts which were desired by many, namely: Antonio de Biedma¹⁹ obtained the post of factor; Juan de Añasco²⁰ that of contador; and Juan Gaytán,²¹ a nephew of Cardinal de Ciquenza, obtained the post of treasurer.

III.

HOW THE PORTUGUESE WENT TO SEVILLE AND THENCE TO SAN LÚCAR; AND HOW THE CAPTAINS WERE APPOINTED OVER THE SHIPS, AND THE MEN WHO WERE TO GO IN THEM DISTRIBUTED.

The Portuguese left Elvas on the 15th of January. They reached Seville on St. Sebastian's eve and went to the governor's lodging. They entered the patio upon which looked some balconies where he was. He looked down and went to meet them at the stairs where they went up to the balconies. When they were up, he ordered chairs to be given them so that they might be seated. André de Vasconcelos told him who he and the other Portuguese were and how they had all come to accompany him and to serve him on his voyage. He [i.e., Soto] thanked him and appeared well pleased with their coming and proffer. The table being already laid, he invited them to eat; and while they were eating, he directed his majordomo to find lodgings for them near his inn. From Seville, the adelantado went to San Lúcar with all the men that were to go with him. He ordered a muster to be held, to which the Portuguese went armed with very splendid arms, and the Castilians very elegantly, in silk over silk, and many plaits and slashes. As such finery was not pleasing to the governor on such an occasion, he ordered a muster to be held on the next day and for every man to appear with his armor. To this the Portuguese came as at first, armed with very excellent armor, and the governor set them in order near the standard borne by his alferéz. Most of the Castilians wore poor and rusty coats of mail, and all [wore] helmets and carried worthless and poor lances. Some of them managed to get a place among the Portuguese. Thus they passed in review, and those who were to the liking of Soto and whom he wished were counted and enrolled and went with him to Florida. Those who went numbered in all six hundred men.²² He had already bought seven ships and had placed in them the provisions

necessary, appointed captains, and assigned his ship to each captain, giving each one a list of the men he was to take.

III.

HOW THE ADELANTADO AND HIS MEN LEFT SPAIN AND ARRIVED AT THE CANARY ISLANDS, AND AFTERWARD AT THE ANTILLES.

In the month of April, of the year 1538, the adelantado delivered the ships over to the captains who were to go in them. He took a new and good sailing ship for himself and gave one to André de Vasconcelos, in which the Portuguese went. He left the bar of San Lúcar on Sunday morning, on the day of St. Lazarus in that month, and as was later written, amid great festivity, ordering the trumpets to be sounded and many rounds of artillery fired. For four days he sailed amid favoring weather and then the wind lulled. The calms with a rolling sea lasted for a week, during which no headway was made. On the fifteenth day after his departure from San Lúcar, he reached Gomera, one of the Canary Islands, on the morning of Easter Sunday. The count of that island was clad entirely in white—cloak, jerkin, hose, shoes, and cap—and resembled a Gypsy count. He received the governor very cordially. The latter was well provided with lodgings, and all the men were lodged there without expense. For his money, he [Soto] was provided with many provisions, bread, wine, and meat; and they took what was needful for the ships. On the following Sunday, a week after their arrival, they left the island of Gomera. The count gave Doña Isabel, the wife of the adelantado, a bastard daughter²³ of his, as her maid. They reached the Antilles at the island of Cuba, at the port of the city of Santiago on Whitsuntide.²⁴ As soon as they arrived there, a gentleman of the city sent a very beautiful and well caparisoned roan horse to the shore for the governor and a mule for Doña Isabel; and all the men of foot and horse who were in the town came to the shore to welcome them. The governor was lodged, visited, and served by all the citizens of that city, and all the men were lodged free of expense. Those who wished to go into the country were quartered among the dwelling and farm houses by fours and sixes, in accordance with the possibility of the owners of the dwellings, and were furnished by the latter with the provisions of which they had need.²⁵

V.

OF THE CITIZENS OF THE CITY OF SANTIAGO AND THE OTHER TOWNS OF THE ISLAND; AND OF THE QUALITY OF THE LAND AND THE FRUITS THEREOF.

The city of Santiago has about eighty large and well-apportioned houses.²⁶ Most of them have wooden walls and roofs of hay. A few are of stone and lime and are roofed with tiles. They have large farms on which are many trees differing from those of Spain—fig trees which produce figs as big as the fist, yellow inside and of little savor; and other trees which produce a fruit called “anona,” of the shape and size of a small pineapple.* It is a tasty fruit, and when the rind is removed, the pulp resembles a piece of curd. On the farms in the country are other large pineapples which grow on low trees that resemble the aloe. They are of excellent odor and of fine taste. Other trees yield a good fruit called “mamei,”²⁷ of the size of a peach, which the islanders consider the best of all the fruits of the land. There is another fruit called guava, resembling the hazel nut in form, the size of a fig. There are other trees as tall as a good lance, with a single stalk having no branches, with leaves broad and as long as a javelin, the fruit of the size and form of a cucumber (on one bunch twenty or thirty); and also as the fruit goes on ripening, the tree goes on bending lower with it. They are called plantains in that land and are of agreeable taste. They ripen after being gathered, although those that ripen on the tree itself are better. The tree produces fruit but once. When the tree is cut down, others grow at the root which yield fruit the next year. There is another fruit on which many people live, especially the slaves, which they call “batata.”† These now grow in the island of

*The Portuguese that Robertson rendered as “They have large farms” is *têm grandes quintaes*. *Quintaes* here is the modern *quintal*, which is “back yard,” rather than the modern *quinta*, which means “country seat” or “rural residence.” This interpretation is suggested also by Elvas’s separate reference to “the farms in the country” as something distinct from the *quintaes* above. Consequently, the preferable translation is “They have large back yards.” In the same context, Elvas used *estância* for farm.

†*Batata*, which Robertson left in Portuguese, is the same word as the one he rendered as “potatoes” in describing *manioc* as resembling potatoes. The *batata* to which Elvas referred is probably the plant known in Cuba and the Dominican Republic as *aje*. See Bernardo Vega, ed., *El aje, un enigma decifrado* (Santo Domingo: Ediciones Museo del Hombre Dominicano, 1978).

Terceira belonging to this kingdom of Portugal. They grow under ground and resemble the yam. They have almost the taste of chestnuts. The bread of that land is also made from roots which resemble potatoes.²⁸ The bread made from those roots resembles the pith of the alder. The earth is heaped up and in each heap four or five stalks are planted; and after they have been planted for a year and a half, the roots are gathered. Should any person, thinking it to be a potato, eat any of it, he runs great risk of death, as was found by experience in the case of a soldier who, as soon as he ate a very little of a root, died immediately. They pare those roots and grate them and crush them in a press. The juice that comes out has a bad smell. The bread has but little taste and less nourishment. Of the fruits of Spain, it [Cuba] has figs and oranges. They produce fruit all year long because the land is very hot and vigorous. In that land are many horses and cattle; and all through the year [there is] green grass. There are many wild cattle and hogs whereby the people of the island are well supplied with meat.²⁹ In the country outside the town are many fruits; and it sometimes happens that some Christian gets lost and wanders about lost for fifteen or twenty days because of the many paths made by the cattle crisscrossing from one part to another through the dense forests. Thus wandering about lost, he keeps alive on fruits and palmetto cabbage, for there are many large palm trees throughout the island which yield no other fruit of any value. The island of Cuba³⁰ is three hundred leagues in extent from east to southeast, and in some places thirty, and in others forty, leagues from north to south. There are six towns of Christians, namely, Santiago, Baracoa, the Bayamo, Puerto Principe, Sancti Spiritus, and the Havana. Each one has between thirty and forty citizens, except Santiago and the Havana, each of which has seventy or eighty houses.³¹ They all have churches and a chaplain who confesses the people and celebrates mass for them. In Santiago there is a Franciscan monastery. It has few friars, but is well provided with alms, because of the richness of the land. The church of Santiago has a suitable income, a parish priest, benefices, and many secular priests, it being the church of that city which is the capital of all the island.³² There is much gold in this land, but few slaves to get it out, for many hanged themselves because of the harsh treatment received in the mines from the Christians. An overseer of Vasco Porcallo, a resident of that island, having learned that his Indians were about to hang themselves, with a rope in his hands,³³ went to await them in the place where they were to meet and told them that they could do nothing nor think of anything which he did not know beforehand; that he was going to hang himself with them, for if he

had given them a hard life in this world, he would give them a worse in the other. This caused them to change their minds and return to do what he ordered them.

V. [I.E., VI].

HOW THE GOVERNOR SENT DOÑA ISABEL WITH THE SHIPS TO THE HAVANA, AND HE WITH SOME OF HIS MEN WENT OVERLAND.

From Santiago, the governor sent Don Carlos, his brother-in-law [*sic*],³⁴ in the ships, together with Doña Isabel with orders to await him at the Havana, which is a port at the eastern³⁵ end of the island, one hundred and eighty leagues from the city of Santiago. The governor and those who remained with him bought horses and set out on their journey. The first town at which they arrived was the Bayamo,³⁶ and they were lodged by fours and sixes just as they went in company. And there where they were lodged they were given their food without expense. Nothing else cost them money except maize for their horses, because from town to town, the governor went to visit each one and assessed it a tax on the tribute and service of the Indians.³⁷ The Bayamo is twenty-five leagues from the city of Santiago. Near it runs a large river, larger than the Guadiana, called Tanto. In it are huge lizards³⁸ which sometimes do harm to the Indians or animals crossing the river. In all the land there are no wolves, foxes, bears, lions, or tigers. There are wild dogs which have left the houses for the woods and live on the hogs. There are some snakes as thick as a man's thigh and more.³⁹ They are very sluggish and do no harm. From Bayamo to Puerto Principe it is fifty leagues. Throughout the island, roads are made from town to town by means of the machete [*rocadoira*]; and any year they neglect to do this, the thickets grow to such an extent that the road does not show. So many are the paths made by the cattle that no one can travel without an Indian of the country for a guide, for most of it is covered with a very lofty and dense forest. From Puerto Principe, the governor went by sea in a canoe to the dwelling of Vasco Porcallo,⁴⁰ which is near the sea, in order to get news of Doña Isabel, who at that time (as was afterward learned) was in great distress—so much so that the ships were lost one from the other (two of them going within sight of the coast of Florida), and all suffered great need of water and food. After the storm

ceased, and the ships were come together again, without knowing whither they had been driven, they came upon the cape of San Antón, an uninhabited district of the island of Cuba. There they got water, and forty days after they had left the city of Santiago they reached the Havana. The governor learned of this immediately and went to Doña Isabel. Those who came overland—in number one hundred and fifty of horse—divided into two divisions in order not to burden the islanders, made their way to Sancti Spiritus,⁴¹ sixty leagues from Puerto Principe. The food they took consisted of cassava bread, which is that I have mentioned above. It is of such quality that if water touches it, it immediately crumbles. On that account, it happened that some ate meat for many days without bread. They took dogs and a native of the country who hunted as they marched, or killed what hogs they needed at the place where they had to stop to sleep. They were well supplied with beef and pork on that journey. They suffered much annoyance from mosquitoes, especially in a swamp called the marsh of the watering trough [*pia*], which gave them considerable trouble in crossing from midday to night. There was more than a half league of water and for the distance of a good crossbow shot they had to swim it; and the rest of it reached to the waist. They were mired up to the knees; and on the bottom were clam shells which cut their feet badly, so that not a single sole of boot or shoe lasted whole for half the way. Their clothes and saddles were taken over on bits of bark from the palm trees. While crossing that swamp without their clothes, many mosquitoes attacked them, which when they stung raised a lump and smarted badly. They would strike at them with the hand, and from the slaps given they killed so many that the blood ran over the arms and bodies of the men. That night they got very little rest because of them, and the same thing was experienced on other nights at like places and seasons. They reached Sancti Spiritus, a town of thirty houses, near which flows a small river.⁴² It is very pleasant and luxuriant, with many fine orange and citron trees and fruits native to the land. Half the men were lodged there, while the others went on twenty-five leagues farther to another town called Trinidad,⁴³ consisting of fifteen or twenty citizens. There is a hospital for the poor there, but no other in the whole island. They say that that town was once the largest of any in the island; and that before the Christians made an entrance into that land, while a ship was coasting along that shore, there came in it a very sick man who requested the captain to have him taken ashore. The captain did so and the ship proceeded on its way. The sick man remained on the shore in that land which so far had never been oppressed by Christians, where the Indians found him and took him and cared for him until he was

well. The lord of that town gave him his daughter in marriage. He [the chief] was at war with all his neighbors, and by means of the skill and courage of the Christian, he subdued and brought under his command all the people of that island. A long time afterward, Governor Diego Velázquez went to conquer it and discovered New Spain from that place. That Christian who was with the Indians pacified them and brought them under the subjection and into the obedience of the governor. From that town of Trinidad to Havana, there is a stretch of eighty leagues without a town, which they traveled. They reached Havana at the end of March where they found the governor and all the rest of the men who had accompanied him from Spain. From Havana, the governor sent Juan de Añasco with a caravel and two brigantines with fifty men to explore the port of Florida. He brought two Indians from there whom he seized on the coast. Thereat (both because they would be needed as guides and interpreters, and because they said by signs that much gold existed in Florida), the governor and all the men were greatly pleased, and thought they would never see the hour of departure, for it seemed to them that was the richest land which had yet been discovered.

VII.

HOW WE LEFT THE HAVANA AND REACHED FLORIDA; AND OF WHAT HAPPENED.

Before our departure, the governor deprived Nuño de Tobar of the post of captain general and gave it to Porcallo de Figueroa,⁴⁴ a citizen of Cuba, who was to see that the ships should sail well-provisioned, and who gave a number of large loads of cassava bread and many hogs. The governor took the post from Nuño de Tobar because he had made love to the daughter of the conde of Gomera, the waiting maid of Doña Isabel. He, notwithstanding that the post was taken from him, took her to wife and went to Florida with Soto, in order to be restored to favor and because she was already pregnant by him.* The governor left Doña Isabel in the Havana⁴⁵ and with her the wives of Don Carlos, Baltasar de Gallegos, and Nuño de Tobar. As his lieutenant for the government of the island, he left a gentleman of the Havana, Juan de Rojas⁴⁶ by name. On Sunday, May 18, of the year 1539, the

*The words "in order to be restored to favor and because she was already pregnant by him" are enclosed in parentheses in the Portuguese text.

adelantado left the Havana with his fleet consisting of nine ships—five vessels with topsails, two caravels, and two brigantines. For seven days, they sailed attended by good weather. On Whitsunday, May 25, they sighted the land of Florida,⁴⁷ and for fear of shoals anchored a league from shore. On Friday, May 30, they disembarked on the land of Florida, two leagues from a town of an Indian chief called Ucita.⁴⁸ They disembarked the two hundred and thirteen horses which they carried, in order to lighten the ships so that they would need less water. All the men landed and only the seamen stayed aboard, who in a week, by going up with the tide for a short distance daily, brought the vessels near to the town. As soon as the men landed the camp was established on the shore near the bay which went up to the town. The captain general, Vasco Porcallo, taking with him seven horse, immediately overran the land for a half league round about and found six⁴⁹ Indians who tried to oppose him with their arrows—the weapons with which they are accustomed to fight. The horsemen killed two of them and the four [others] escaped, for the land being obstructed by woods and swamps, the horses, because of weakness from voyaging on the sea, became mired there and fell with their masters. That night following, the governor with one hundred men in the brigantines came upon a town which he found without people, because the Christians were perceived as soon as they came within sight of land; and they saw many smokes along the whole coast, which the Indians made in order to give information to one another. On the following day, Luis de Moscoso,⁵⁰ *maese de campo*, set the men in order, those on horse in three squadrons—the vanguard, the battle line, and the rear guard—and in that way they marched that day and the next, going around great mud flats which come from the bay. They arrived at the town of Ucita, where the governor was, on Sunday, June first, the day of the Trinity. The town consisted of seven or eight houses. The chief's house stood near the beach on a very high hill which had been artificially built as a fortress.⁵¹ At the other side of the town was the temple and on top of it a wooden bird with its eyes gilded. Some pearls, spoiled by fire and of little value, were found there. The Indians bore them through in order to string them for beads, which are worn around the neck or arm, and they esteem them greatly.* The houses were of wood and were covered with palm leaves. The governor was lodged in the houses of the chief and with him Vasco Porcallo and Luis de Moscoso; and in the other houses which were located in the middle of the town, the

*The Portuguese that Robertson translated simply as "arm" is *no colo de braço*, which means literally, "on the neck (or lap) of the arm" or, more comprehensibly, "the upper arm."

chief constable, Baltasar de Gallegos. And apart in the same houses were placed the provisions carried on the ships. The other houses and the temple were destroyed, and a mess of every three or four built a small house in which they were lodged.* The land round about was greatly encumbered and choked with a vast and lofty forest. The governor ordered it to be cut down for the space of a crossbow shot about the town, in order that the horses might run and the Christians have the advantage of the Indians if the latter should by chance try to attack them by night. They posted foot soldiers as sentinels, in couples at each position along the roads and at proper places, who stood watch for four hours [*por quartas*]. The horsemen visited them and were ready to aid them if there should be an alarm. The governor appointed four captains over the horsemen and two over the foot soldiers. Those over the horse were: one, André de Vasconcelos,⁵² and second, Pedro Calderón, of Badajóz, and the other two his kinsmen, the Cardenosa (Arias Tinoco and Alfonso Romo), also natives of Badajóz. One of the captains over the foot soldiers was Francisco Maldonado of Salamanaca, and the other Juan Rodriguez Lobillo.⁵³ While they were in that town of Ucita, the Indians⁵⁴ whom Juan de Añasco had captured along that coast and whom the governor brought along as guides and interpreters escaped one night through the carelessness of two men who were guarding them. The governor and all were very sorry for this, for some forays had already been made, but no Indians could be captured, as the land was swampy and in many parts covered with very lofty and thick woods.

VIII.

HOW SOME FORAYS WERE MADE AND A CHRISTIAN WAS FOUND WHO HAD BEEN IN THE POWER OF AN INDIAN CHIEF FOR A LONG TIME.

The Governor sent the chief constable, Baltasar de Gallegos, from the town of Ucita with forty horse and eight foot into the interior to see whether any Indian could be captured; and in another direction, Captain Juan

*The Portuguese word *desbaratar*, which Robertson translated as "destroyed," can be rendered also as "dismantled." In this context "dismantled" seems to make more sense inasmuch as De Soto's men were building small huts for themselves to replace the ones that they allegedly "destroyed." "Destroy" suggests fire and destruction by fire would possibly have endangered the house in which the provisions were stored or the one chosen by Gallegos.

Rodriguez Lobillo, with fifty foot, most of them armed with swords and shields. Others were arquebusiers and crossbowmen. They went over a swampy land where the horsemen could not go. A half league from camp they came upon some Indian huts near the river; [but] the people who were inside them plunged into the river. They captured four Indian women, and twenty Indians came at us and attacked us so stoutly that we had to retreat to the camp, because of their being (as they are) so skillful with their weapons. Those people are so warlike and so quick that they make no account of foot soldiers; for if these go for them, they flee, and when their adversaries turn their backs they are immediately on them. The farthest they flee is the distance of an arrow shot. They are never quiet but always running and crossing from one side to another so that the crossbows or the arquebuses can not be aimed at them; and before a crossbowman can fire a shot, an Indian can shoot three or four arrows, and very seldom does he miss what he shoots at. If the arrow does not find armor, it penetrates as deeply as a crossbow. The bows are very long and the arrows are made of certain reeds like canes, very heavy and so tough that a sharpened cane passes through a shield.* Some are pointed with a fish bone, as sharp as an awl, and others with a certain stone like a diamond point. Generally when these strike against armor, they break off at the place where they are fastened on. Those of cane split and enter through the links of mail and are more hurtful. Juan Rodriguez Lobillo reached the camp with six men wounded, one of whom died. He brought the four Indian women whom he had captured in the quarters or huts.⁵⁵ Ablate de Gallegos, on going into the level terrain two leagues from town, saw ten or eleven Indians, among whom was a Christian, naked and on that account burned by the sun. He had his arms tattooed after the manner of the Indians and in no wise did he differ from them. As soon as the horsemen saw them they ran at them. The Indians took to flight and hid from them in a forest. They overtook two or three of them who had been wounded. The Christian, as one of the horsemen was about to charge him with his lance, began to cry out, "Sirs, I am a Christian; do not kill me. Do not kill these Indians, for they have given me my life."⁵⁶ Thereupon, he called the latter and reassured them; whereupon, they came out of the woods. The horsemen took both the Christian and the Indians before them and entered the camp at nightfall very joyful. When this was learned by the governor, and those who had remained in camp, they were received with the same rejoicing.

*The Portuguese word *nijas*, which Robertson translated as "tough," might be rendered also as "rigid" or "stiff" to reflect the nuance better.

IX.

HOW THAT CHRISTIAN WENT TO THE LAND OF FLORIDA, WHO HE WAS, AND WHAT TOOK PLACE WITH THE GOVERNOR.

That Christian was called Juan Ortiz and was a native of Seville, of a noble family. For twelve years he had been in the hands of the Indians. He had gone to that land with Governor Narvaez and had returned in the ships to the island of Cuba, where the wife of Governor Pánfilo de Narvaez had remained. At her order, with twenty or thirty others he returned to Florida in a brigantine. Arriving at the port, within sight of the town, they saw on land a cane sticking in the ground with its top split and holding a letter. They believed that the governor had left it in order to give news of himself when he resolved to go inland. They asked four or five Indians who were walking on the beach for it, but the latter told them by signs to come ashore for it, which Juan Ortiz and another did contrary to the wish of the others. As soon as they reached land, many Indians came out of the houses of the town and surrounded them and seized them so that they could not escape. The other man who tried to defend himself they killed immediately in that place, and Juan Ortiz they seized by the hands and led to their chief, Ucita. The men in the brigantine refused to land and made for the open sea and returned to the island of Cuba. Ucita ordered Juan Ortiz to be bound hand and foot on a grill laid on top of four stakes [*barra*]. He ordered a fire to be kindled under him in order to burn him there. The chief's daughter asked him not to kill him [Ortiz], saying that a single Christian could not do him any ill or good, and that it would be more to his [the cacique's] honor to hold him captive. Ucita granted this and ordered him taken care of; and as soon as he was well, gave him charge of the guarding of the temple, for at night wolves would carry off the corpses from inside it. He commended himself to God and watched over their temple. One night the wolves carried off from him the corpse of a child, the son of one of the principal Indians. Going after it, he threw a club, which struck the wolf carrying the body, which, finding itself wounded, abandoned it and went off to die nearby.* He [Ortiz], not knowing what he had done as it was night, returned to the temple. At day-

*The word *vara*, which Robertson rendered as "club," is more likely to have been a "spear."

break, when he found the body of the child gone, he became very sad. As soon as Ucita learned of it, he determined to have him killed. He sent [men] along the trail where he [Ortiz] said the wolves had gone, and they found the boy's corpse and farther on the dead wolf. Whereupon, Ucita was greatly pleased with the Christian and at the watch he had kept in the temple, and thenceforward showed him great honor. After being in captivity to him for three years, another chief named Mocoço, who lived two days' journey from the port, came and burned the town. Ucita went in flight to another town he had in another seaport. Juan Ortiz lost his post and the favor he enjoyed from him. And since they [the Indians] are servants of the devil, they are accustomed to offer him souls and blood of their Indians or of any other people they can get. They say that when he [the devil] desires that sacrifice be made to him, he talks with them and tells them he is thirsty and that they should offer a sacrifice to him. Juan Ortiz learned from the girl who had saved him from the fire that her father had determined to sacrifice him the next day; and she told him that he should go to Mocoço, that she knew he would show him honor for she had heard him say that he would ask for him; and she said he would be glad to see him. At night, since he did not know the way, the Indian woman went a half league from the town and put him on it, and in order that this might not be perceived, returned [to the town].⁵⁷ Juan Ortiz traveled that night and in the morning came to a river which was already within the boundary of Mocoço and there he saw two Indians fishing. And since they were hostile to those of Ucita and their languages were different, and he did not know that of Mocoço, he feared lest, inasmuch as he did not know how to say who he was and how he came nor how to give an explanation concerning himself, they would kill him thinking him to be an Indian of Ucita. Before they saw him, he came to where they had their weapons, and as soon as they saw him, they ran along the road to the town. And although he told them to wait, that he would do them no harm, they did not understand him and ran away as fast as they could. And when they reached the town, shouting, many Indians came out toward him and began to surround him in order to shoot him with arrows. Juan Ortiz, seeing himself in so great an emergency, hid behind some trees and began to call out very loudly and to cry out and to say that he was a Christian who was fleeing from Ucita and came to see and serve Mocoço, their chief. It was God's will that an Indian who knew the language came up at that time and understood him and made the other Indians keep still, telling them what he [Ortiz] said to him. Three or four Indians were dispatched from there who went to

report to their chief, who came out to welcome him a quarter league from the town and was very glad to see him. He immediately made him swear according to his custom as a Christian that he would not run off to any other chief, and promised him that he would show him much honor and that, if at any time, Christians should come to that land, he would release him freely and give him permission to go to them. And so he swore according to his custom as an Indian. Three years after that, some Indians who were fishing in the sea two leagues from the town came to inform Mocoço that they had seen some ships. He called Juan Ortiz and gave him permission to go, who having bade him farewell reached the sea as soon as he could. But not finding the ships, he thought he had been deceived and that the cacique had done that to ascertain his desire. So he remained with Mocoço for nine years, now with little expectation of seeing Christians. As soon as the governor reached Florida, it was known by Mocoço. He immediately told Juan Ortiz that Christians were lodging in the town of Ucita. It seemed to the latter that he [Mocoço] was jesting with him as on the other occasion and told him that the Christians did not come to his mind nor anything else than to serve him. He [Mocoço] assured him of it and gave him permission to go to them, telling him that if he refused to do it, and the Christians returned, he must not hold him guilty, for he was accomplishing what he had promised him. So great was Juan Ortiz's joy that he could not believe it to be true. However, he thanked [Mocoço] and took his leave of him. Mocoço gave him ten or twelve⁵⁸ of the principal Indians to go in his company. On his way to the port where the governor was, he met Baltasar de Gallegos, as I have said above. As soon as he reached the camp, the governor ordered some clothes to be given him and some good arms and a beautiful horse. He asked him if he had heard of any land where there was gold or silver. He said no, he had never gone more than ten leagues round about from where he was, and that thirty leagues from there resided an Indian chief called Paracoxi,⁵⁹ to whom Mocoço and Ucita and all those of that coast paid tribute; that perhaps he might have some information of any good land; and that his land was indeed better than that of the coast and more fertile and abounding in maize. At this the governor was greatly pleased and said that he wished only to find provisions in order that he might go inland; that the land of Florida was so vast that there could not but be rich land at one end or the other. The cacique of Mocoço came to the port to visit the governor and made him the following talk:

"Very lofty and very mighty lord: In my own estimation, to obey you,

least of all those whom you hold under your command but greatest in my desire to perform greater services for you, I appear before your Lordship with as much confidence of receiving favor as if, in fact, this my good will were manifest to you by deeds (not for the small service which I did you of the Christian whom I hold in my possession, by giving him his liberty freely, for I was obliged to do that in order to keep my honor and what I had promised him), but because it belongs to the great to exercise their office with great magnificence; and I hold that you precede all those of the land both in bodily perfections and in ruling good men, as well as in the perfections of the mind with which you can boast of the liberality of nature. The favor which I await from your Lordship is that you consider me as your own, and feel free to command me in whatever I may serve you."⁶⁰

The governor answered him saying that, although in freeing and sending him the Christian, he had kept his honor and his promise, he thanked him and appreciated him so much that there was no comparison and that he would always consider him as a brother and that he would protect him in every way. He ordered a shirt and other clothing to be given him, with which the cacique very happy bade him farewell and went to his town.

X.

HOW THE GOVERNOR SENT THE SHIPS TO CUBA AND LEFT ONE HUNDRED MEN IN THE PORT WHILE HE AND THE REST OF THE MEN MARCHED INLAND.

From the port of Espiritu Santo,⁶¹ where the governor was, he sent the chief constable, Baltasar de Gallegos, with fifty horse and thirty or forty foot to the province of Paracoxi, in order to note the disposition of the land and gather information of the land that lay beyond and to send him word of what he found. He sent the ships to the island of Cuba with orders to return with provisions at a certain time.⁶² Since the principal intent of Vasco Porcallo de Figueroa, who came with the governor as captain general, was to send slaves from Florida to the island of Cuba where he had his lands and his mines, and since he had made some forays and found that he could not capture any Indians because of the dense thickets and vast swamps in that land, upon seeing the character of the land, he determined to return to

Cuba. And although there was some difference between him and the governor so that they did not willingly hold any communication or conversation with each other, he asked him [De Soto] courteously to leave and took his departure from him.⁶³ Baltasar de Gallegos reached Paracoxi and thirty Indians came to him on the part of the cacique who was absent from his town, one of whom spoke as follows:

"King Paracoxi, lord of this province, whose vassals we are, sent us to your grace to learn what you seek in this his land and in what he can serve you."

Baltasar de Gallegos answered them saying that he thanked him [the cacique] heartily for his offer and that they should tell their lord that he should come to his town and that there they could converse and make peace and friendship which he very greatly desired. The Indians went and returned next day saying that their lord was ill and on that account could not come; and that they came before him [Gallegos] to see what he ordered. He asked them if they knew or had information of any rich land where there was gold or silver. They said yes, that there was a province toward the west called Cale,⁶⁴ and that the people of that land were hostile to others living in other lands where it was summer most of the year. That land had gold in abundance and when those people came to make war on the people of Cale, they wore hats of gold resembling helmets. When Baltasar de Gallegos perceived that the cacique did not come, as it seemed to him that all these messages were pretense, in order that he [the cacique] might meanwhile get away safely, and fearing lest if he allowed the thirty Indians to go, they would never return, he ordered them put in chains and had the governor informed by eight horse of what was happening. At this the governor and all those in the port with him received great joy, for they believed that what the Indians said might be true. The governor left Captain Calderón in the port with thirty horse and seventy foot with food for two years.⁶⁵ He and all the rest of the men marched inland and reached Paracoxi where Baltasar de Gallegos was, and from there, with all the men of the latter, he took the road toward Cale. He passed through a small town, Acela⁶⁶ by name, and reached another town called Tocaste.⁶⁷ Thence, with thirty horse and fifty foot, he went on toward Cale. As they passed through a town which had been depopulated, they saw some Indians of that town in a shallow lake, to whom the interpreter spoke. They came and gave an Indian to act as guide. He [the governor] came to a river with a swift current and on a tree in the middle of it, a foot bridge was made on which the men crossed. The horses crossed by swim-

ming by means of a tackle which was drawn by those on the other side, for the first horse they drove in without it was drowned. From there, the governor sent two horsemen to the men who had stayed behind, ordering them to hurry for the road was long and provisions were lacking.⁶⁸ He reached Cale and found the town without people. He seized three Indians who were spies. There he awaited the men who were coming behind, who were experiencing great hardship from hunger and bad roads, as the land was very poor in maize, low, and very wet, swampy, and covered with dense forests, and the provisions brought from the port were finished. Wherever any village was found, there were some blites [*bredos*],⁶⁹ and he who came first gathered them and, having stewed them with water and salt, ate them without anything else. Those who could not get any of them, gathered the stalks from the maize fields which being still young had no maize, and ate them. Having reached the river which the governor had crossed, they found palm cabbages in low palm trees like those of Andalusia. There came two horsemen whom the governor had sent, who told them that there was maize in abundance in Cale; at which all were rejoiced. As soon as they reached Cale, the governor ordered all the maize which was ripe in the fields to be taken, which was enough for three months.* When they were gathering this, the Indians killed three Christians, and one of two Indians who were captured told the governor that seven days' journey farther on was a very large province with maize in abundance, called Apalache.⁷⁰ He immediately set out from Cale with fifty horse and sixty foot, leaving the *maestre de campo*, Luis de Moscoso, with all the rest of the men and ordering him not to move thence until getting word from him. Inasmuch as there was no one to serve them, the bread each one had to eat, he ground in a mortar cannon or mortar made of a log, with a pestle like a window bar. Some sifted the meal through their coats of mail. The bread was baked in some flat pieces of earthen vessels which they set on the fire, in the same way as I have already said was done in Cuba.† It is so difficult to grind that many, who would not formerly eat it unless it was ground, ate the maize parched and sodden.

*The Portuguese term *sêco*, which Robertson rendered as "ripe," rendered literally is "dry."

†The Portuguese that Robertson translated as "in some flat pieces of earthen vessels" is *em uns têtos*. A *têsto* is a lid or cover of an iron or clay vessel.